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ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUESTIONS: REPORTS OF SUBSIDIARY BODIES, CONFERENCES AND RELATED QUESTIONS

Consultative meeting on a coalition of resources for science and technology for development

Report of the Secretary-General

The purpose of this progress report is to bring Member States up to date on actions being taken to implement Economic and Social Council resolution 1993/73 and arrangements being made to hold a consultative meeting on a more effective coalition of resources for science and technology for development.

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 46/165 of 19 December 1991, requested concrete proposals for organizing a more effective coalition of resources to meet the scientific and technological needs of developing countries. The mandate given to the Secretary-General in that context was to present proposals on how to structure and manage a more effective coalition of resources which could provide momentum to the process of building the endogenous, scientific and technological capacities of developing countries.

2. In pursuance of that resolution and the discussion by the Commission on Science and Technology for Development at its first session, the Economic and Social Council requested the Secretary-General to convene a consultative meeting on the subject (resolution 1993/73).

* E/1994/100.

3. The Council further decided that the objectives of the consultative meeting should be to:

(a) Compare and exchange views on portfolios of programmes and projects in science and technology in support of endogenous capacity-building at the national, regional and global levels;

(b) Consider ways and means of securing continual interaction and complementarity of the institutions involved in the financing of science and technology and suggest specific ways in which such cooperation could continue for the harmonization of their policies and the enhancement of specific opportunities for a coalition of resources among the interested financing and funding institutions.

4. In preparation for the proposed consultative meeting, the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development of the United Nations Secretariat organized informal consultations with Council Member States on 31 March 1994 to exchange views on the nature and timing of the consultative meeting. The informal consultation was attended by 18 countries. The Secretariat had prepared a concept paper as a basis for discussion. The basic premise of the concept paper was that, given the limited success of the Fund for Science and Technology for Development, it would be difficult to mobilize new financial resources for science and technology, in its generic form, without a more compelling orientation which could attract donor support. The paper proposed that the focus of the coalition be narrowed to the transfer of environmentally sound technology and related scientific know-how.

5. The main points of discussion and understanding were the following:

(a) The objectives of the consultative meeting should follow those set out in resolution 1993/73;

(b) The proposed coalition of resources should continue to address science and technology for development from a generic perspective. The principles and objectives of the Vienna Programme of Action, adopted in 1979 at the United Nations Conference on Science and Technology for Development, are still considered valid;

(c) The General Assembly, in resolution 44/14, identified a broad programmatic focus for the coalition, namely, to strengthen the endogenous capacity-building of developing countries in science and technology. This would need to be further elaborated and sharpened, taking into account the needs and priorities of developing countries and reflecting - but not being limited to - sustainable development aspects related to Agenda 21;

(d) The focus of the coalition, to be considered at the proposed consultative meeting, would be on improving the coordination of resources devoted to science and technology for development within the United Nations system and improving the coordination of financing policies and resources of the development banks and financial institutions for financing science and technology in order to ensure harmonization and complementarity among the different sources of funding;

(e) The United Nations should act as a facilitator in initiating dialogues among the United Nations agencies, outside multilateral and bilateral organizations, financial institutions and the private sector. The objective of the coalition, built upon a series of such dialogues, would be to coordinate policies by optimizing the resources made available to support endogenous capacity-building in science and technology for developing countries;

(f) The consultative meeting, lasting one or two days, will be held in the last quarter of 1994. It was agreed that the meeting should be held after the outcome of the deliberations of the Council coordination segment on the theme of science and technology for development is known;

(g) The consultative meeting should include representatives of the Council member States, the core United Nations agencies active in science and technology, the World Bank, major development and regional banks and other multilateral and bilateral donors who support science and technology for development;

(h) A short background document on the funding activities of these organizations in support of science and technology in developing countries will be prepared by the Secretariat;

(i) The consultative meeting would be prepared by the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development in close association with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the United Nations Development Programme.